

Building Collaborative Practices

H-Farm International School Venice

Collaborating for Inclusion: Co-Planning to Support Multilingual Learners and All Students

H-Farm International School - **PYP**

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Research Questions

How does the intentional co-planning for whole-class scaffolding between homeroom and EAL teachers support multilingual learners and the wider class overall?

How might insights from this process inform and strengthen co-planning practices across the school?

Literature Review

Previous research suggests that collaboration between classroom and language support teachers strengthens inclusion and academic outcomes for multilingual learners (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010; García & Kleifgen, 2018). Furthermore, scaffolds designed for multilingual learners benefit the wider class by improving clarity, access, and participation in learning (Hammond, 2015; Gibbons, 2015). High-impact strategies include visual supports, explicit modeling, structured academic talk, and translanguageing practices (Cummins, 2000; García & Wei, 2014). Research indicates that these approaches are most effective when teachers engage in intentional co-planning grounded in shared responsibility, regular collaboration, and alignment between language and content learning goals (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018). These understandings informed our inquiry into how purposeful HR–ELS co-planning could support all learners and strengthen inclusive practice across our school.

Methodology

Following a whole staff discussion of high impact strategies for MLL, Homeroom (HR) and English Language Specialist (ELS) teachers collaboratively chose, planned and embedded MLL scaffolds into whole class instruction. Scaffolds included:

- visual supports
- explicit modeling
- structured academic talk
- translanguaging practices

Data was then gathered through:

- teacher reflections
- feedback from the PYP coordinator

[Click here](#) for data, evidence and teacher responses.



Findings

According to teachers,

- MLLs exhibited increased confidence, participation, and independence, as well as improved comprehension and language production.
- The wider class benefited through greater clarity, access to complex ideas, and stronger engagement.

According to the PYP Coordinator,

- Co-planning in this way strengthened teacher collaboration, shared responsibility, and understanding of inclusive instructional design.
- Weekly team meetings were particularly valuable for discussing student needs and planning responsive next steps.

Discussion

- Inclusive scaffolds should be viewed as whole-class supports rather than separate interventions.
- Effective co-planning strengthens instructional coherence and supports more responsive teaching.
- Findings suggest that collaboration is most effective when it is:
 - collaborative and inquiry-driven
 - embedded within regular team structures
 - grounded in practical, accessible strategies
- Schools may strengthen inclusive practice through shared planning systems, visible strategy supports, and protected collaboration time.

Reflections About Research (PYP)

Engaging in the research process

- deepened professional dialogue across the a school (through whole staff meeting and informal conversation) and between HR and ELS teachers (at weekly planning meetings).
- helped make instructional decisions more intentional and visible.
- allowed us to see how small adjustments in scaffolding can significantly impact student participation and confidence.
- reinforced the importance of ongoing reflection, flexibility, and shared responsibility in inclusive practice.

Looking Forward

- Investigate how clearer language and content learning targets can influence planning, instruction and student outcomes.
- Strengthen consistency of structured co-planning practices for MLLs across year levels.
- Develop, share and make time to discuss shared resources and strategy supports for teachers.
- Continue exploring how inquiry learning can remain rigorous and linguistically accessible to all learners.

Works Consulted

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy*. Multilingual Matters.

Dove, M., & Honigsfeld, A. (2018). *Co-Teaching for English Learners*. Corwin.

García, O., & Kleifgen, J. (2018). *Educating Emergent Bilinguals*. Teachers College Press.

García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning*. Heinemann.

Hammond, J. (2015). *Scaffolding Teaching and Learning in Language and Literacy Education*. Primary English Teaching Association Australia.

Honigsfeld, A., & Dove, M. (2010). *Collaboration and Co-Teaching: Strategies for English Learners*. Corwin.

Strengthening Collaboration Between MYP Subject Teachers and EAL Specialists to Enhance Instruction for Multilingual Learners

H-Farm International School Venice - **MYP**

Romy Bottrill, Jana Pridalova

Research Question

What impact does structured co-planning between EAL specialists and Science teachers have on instructional practices and learning targets?

Phase 1 of a longitudinal study in MYP: working with teacher volunteers to explore the impact of structured co-planning on teachers' confidence and explore collaborative practices in place as well as ways to strengthen the existing practice

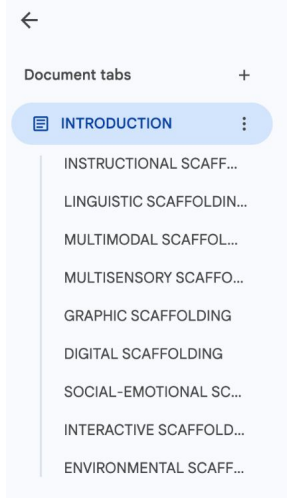
Literature Review

- Key texts were scrutinised for a book study so that a co-planning template could be created (Porter, Honigsfeld)

Author: Porter, Holly. <i>Intentional Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners: An Equitable Approach to Integrating Content and Language</i> . Paul H Brookes Publishing, 2024. Resource Folder  Porter	
Key Idea	Details
KEY TAKEAWAY: <i>An excellent, detailed overview of what co-planning and co-teaching should look like, with templates that can be adapted for our purposes (including roles and responsibilities of each teacher, agreements, rubric for analysis co-teaching practices etc.)</i>	
SYSTEMIC ELEMENTS Setting up structures for co-teaching Time for co-planning Time for reflection	'Clustering' principle (intentional placement of ML learners in classroom where co-teaching will take place) - no more than 40% of the classroom is a cluster group of ML <i>"Co-planning becomes just as important as the co-teaching itself."</i> 1 co-planning period per week for one class/content area Quarterly or by trimester to reflect on co-teaching practice (partnership and instruction; formal or informal)  Rubric_for_Analyzing_Co-Teaching_Practices.pdf Structures & Time Not Yet = not yet practising to any degree, or beginning your journey Somewhat = sometimes practising, but on a regular basis (less than 50%) Mostly = practising regularly and often (50-90%) Completely = practising the indicator all of the time (100% of the time in 100% of the school)

Literature Review

- Honigsfeld and Dove's resource *9 Dimensions of Scaffolding* was used to create a playbook for EAL specialists to use during co-planning sessions
- Playbook was used alongside the H-Farm *Framework for Teaching Multilingual Learners Toolkit* of strategies for teachers



Notes: Honigsfeld, Dove, Goldman_9 Dimensions of Scaffolding for Multilingual Learners									
9 Dimension of Scaffolding (Resource Folder)									
Key Idea	Details								
KEY TAKEAWAY: This is an excellent source to turn to during co-planning for useful scaffolding strategies that serve as BEST PRACTICE for ALL students. Refer to the tab bar to the left of document to see different chapters.									
INTRODUCTION									
Scaffolding (22)	PURPOSE - What is the goal of scaffolding? "By responding to the diverse needs of students, scaffolds not only sustain learning but also elevate it to higher levels of rigor." (22) The table below highlights questions that can help teachers' decision-making process about what/how to scaffold. It also encourages students to think about their own learning and decide what tools help them best. <table><tr><th colspan="2">TABLE 1.2 • Aligning Teacher's and Student's Reflection Questions for Scaffolding</th></tr><tr><th>TEACHER</th><th>STUDENTS</th></tr><tr><td>What do my students need to know? How will they evidence this?</td><td>What do I need to know? How do I show it?</td></tr><tr><td>How do students know the critical parts? What do they need to know about them?</td><td>How do I know the important parts and what I need to know about them? What</td></tr></table>	TABLE 1.2 • Aligning Teacher's and Student's Reflection Questions for Scaffolding		TEACHER	STUDENTS	What do my students need to know? How will they evidence this?	What do I need to know? How do I show it?	How do students know the critical parts? What do they need to know about them?	How do I know the important parts and what I need to know about them? What
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Key Secondary Sources

Dove, Maria G., et al. *Nine Dimensions of Scaffolding for Multilingual Learners*. Corwin Press, 2025

Honigsfeld, Andrea, and Maria G. Dove. *Co-Planning*. Corwin Press, 2021.

de Oliveira, L. C., Braxton, D., & Gui, J. (2021). Planning for instruction using a language-based approach to content instruction for multilingual learners. *Volume 13, Issue 1, Article 2*. Virginia Commonwealth University.

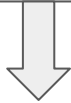
Porter, Holly. *Intentional Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners*. Paul H Brookes Publishing, 2024.

Sweeney, D. & Harris, L. (2017) *Student-Centered Coaching: The Moves*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin/SAGE Publications.

Methodology

1. Identified teachers willing to collaborate - Science department (lower and higher MYP)
2. Identified classes for structured co-planning - EAL Specialist and EAL Enhanced students in all 3 classes
3. Benchmark: rubric investigating co-planning and co-teaching practices filled in by Science and EAL teachers (prior and post project)

Documentation



[Co-planning Practices Rubric](#)
[Co-Planning Template](#)

Teacher Reflections



Reflection Questions (after each planning session)
Journaling (during the final phase)

Findings

Documentation

Increased consistency in collaborative planning

- Moved from irregular to more structured and consistent co-planning sessions using a shared planning template
- Co-planning more intentional
- Participants reported greater clarity in terms of purpose and structure of the meetings

Greater clarity about roles

- Teachers demonstrated improved understanding of roles within the process
- More reciprocal partnership

Increased attention to language demands

- Discussions increasingly incorporated language objectives (alongside content objectives)
- Lesson planning reflected more intentional integration of scaffolds for multilingual learners

Findings

Rubric for Analysing Co-Planning/Co-Teaching Practices				
Areas of Focus	Not Yet	Somewhat	Mostly	Completely
Co-Planning				
Co-teaching team plans together on a regular basis using an agreed-upon and shared template.	x			x
Each member of the co-teaching team contributes to lesson plans according to their area of expertise: either content or language.	x		x	
During the co-planning session, co-teachers discuss Lesson Targets, Strategies and Scaffolds, and Roles and Responsibilities.	x			x

Findings

Co-Instructing				
Co-teachers deliver lessons or small-group sessions which integrate content instruction and the language demands of the lesson (word, sentence, and discourse dimensions).	x		x	

Adapted from Porter, Holly. *Intentional Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners*. Paul H Brookes Publishing, 2024.

Co-teachers employ various scaffolds, strategies and co-teaching approaches to make content comprehensible to MLs.	x		x	
Co-teachers use flexible, intentional grouping structures to address MLs' unique learning needs.	x		x	

Findings

Teacher Reflections

Growth in teachers' self-efficacy and confidence

- EAL specialists felt more included in the planning process
- Subject teachers reported increased confidence in supporting multilingual learners in Science classroom

Here the EAL children engaged in the lesson

Very good presentation, good level of confidence and descriptive language. Engaged to a good level in lesson material too.

Did you find the vocabulary self-assessment tool useful?

Yes, Very useful to make the students self-aware of their limitations with grammar/ words, and how to use these words in sentences.

Any challenges/ successes?

EAL Students, big success! Very confident with their English and presentations. Use of descriptive language was excellent - Challenge was to develop language for deeper explanation

Capacity Constraints

- Limited time available for collaborative planning during the final weeks of the school term
- Need for protected and regularly scheduled co-planning time within the timetable for the following academic year
- One teacher highlighted lack of fully developed units - this limited the effectiveness of co-planning
- Importance of beginning collaborative planning at the start of each new unit to reduce reactive or last-minute planning

Discussion

Engaging in this action research clearly highlighted the fact that **structured** co-planning leads to greater clarity and consistency as it provides both subject teachers and EAL specialists with regular opportunities (that quickly become **routine**) to discuss support strategies and adaptive teaching approaches for multilingual learners.

Moreover, findings raised the following points for consideration:

- Structured co-planning time brings about greater teacher confidence to plan and embed scaffolds for multilingual learners
- One teacher saw an opportunity to extend this collaboration when planning a transition unit for students moving from MYP5 to DP1; co-planning and co-assessment were seen as adding value to curriculum continuity
- Results of this research also indicate that the impact of co-planning does not rest solely on instructional practice but it is a form of professional learning for both the subject teachers and the EAL specialists

Looking Forward

Phase 2: November 2026 MLRC action research

Explore impact of structured co-planning on instructional planning and pedagogy

Key areas for development:

- Further refinement and consistent use of the co-planning template to support structured collaboration
- Integration of WIDA standards into co-planning sessions
- More explicit integration of language objectives within both unit and lesson plans
- Engage in an ongoing cycle of *co-planning* and *co-reflection* with individual departments